

Discoveries in Western America

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from his pocket, he made a dash at me, smashed my collar, broke my watch guard into a dozen pieces, tore my hair down, and succeeded in planting a kiss on my nose, greatly to the delight of the company.

"Now, elder, what is the damages? Don't be afraid to speak."

"Whatever you please, said Mr. Morrison. Lemuel produced a piece of fur.

"There, elder," said he, "there's a piece of muskrat's skin; and out in the shed is two heads of cabbage, and you're welcome to the hull of it."

My husband bowed his thanks, the young people went to dancing, Mrs. Burke went to getting breakfast, and at my earnest request, Mr. Morrison got our horse and we bade them adieu. I never should have lived through another meal in that house.

I have since heard that Mr. Lord said that if he had seen the elder's wife before he married, Sally might have gone to the dickens.

"Alas, it might have been!"

✓ DISCOVERIES IN WESTERN AMERICA.

FIVE years ago, in 1868, a great river, gathering its waters for a thousand miles, among the deep gorges and snow-clad summits of the Rocky Mountains, plunged into the "Grand Canon" of the Colorado, and was lost for five hundred miles, till, as was supposed, it was found within one or two hundred miles of the Gulf of California. For half a century the nation had owned the mountains in which it had its origin, and for nearly half that time the head of the gulf into which it poured its waters; but the desert wastes through which it ran were as much a mystery as the

sources of the Nile. Mountain trappers and Indian scouts had followed down the Green and the Grand Rivers to where they unite and form the Colorado of the West; Fremont and Gunnison had crossed them at various points; Lieutenant Ives had explored the Colorado from the Gulf of California up into a marvelous canon; but all between was alike unknown to science. Vast and sterile as the central regions of America confessedly are, the ignorance which prevailed so long in regard to this great river was by no means creditable to our vaunted enterprise. Prompted by a determination to solve the mystery, Major Powell, a professor in the Illinois Normal University, obtained from Congress, in the winter of 1867-8, an appropriation in the shape of transportation and rations for a small party, with whom he proposed to follow the Colorado down to the Gulf of California. In the spring of 1868 he crossed the Berthoud Pass of the Rocky Mountains, west of Georgetown, and followed down the Grand River to southwestern Colorado, where most of the party went into winter quarters. Major Powell returned, had four boats built of peculiar construction and great strength, and early in the spring of 1869 he had them transported by the Union Pacific Railway to Green River. There they were launched, and he commenced his long and dangerous voyage down the Green, a principal branch of the Colorado, to the Gulf of California. The description of the canon of the Green through the Uintah Mountains, fully detailed at the time by Major Powell himself, added a new and wonderful chapter to our knowledge of the topography of the country. In due time the tiny fleet with its brave crew arrived at the head of the Grand Canon of the Colorado, and plunged into its mysterious recesses. After months of toil and dangers without numbers, after the loss of some of their boats while shooting the rapids, many hair-breadth escapes from drowning, Major Powell and his party reached the section of the river explored by Lieutenant Ives, and, to their lasting honor, the Grand Canon of the Colorado is no longer a mystery. Its cascades and its

cataracts; its awful gorges, some of them more than six thousand feet (a mile and a quarter) deep; its geology, and many curious facts in regard to the extinct races who once sought refuge from the savage foes among its beetling crags, are all known.

But the most wonderful discoveries made within the last five years are the Geysers at the head-waters of the Yellowstone. They will ever be ranked among the wonders of the world. From childhood we have all seen pictures of the great geysers in Iceland; but the voyage thither is so long and expensive; the journey inland for fifty or one hundred miles is so dangerous and difficult, and, withal, Iceland is so near the North Pole, that probably not one in a million who have read the accounts of them have ever expected to see a real, live, spouting geyser. The Iceland geyser, in its most angry moods, throws the water and mud one hundred feet high; but, according to careful measurement, the Yellowstone geysers belch their water and mud more than two hundred feet in air. Notices of them, derived from trappers and mountain guides, began to make their way into the newspapers in 1869 or 1870. In the latter year, if we mistake not, Lieutenant Doane visited them, and in 1871 Dr. Hayden, United States Geologist, and a small detachment of the army, under command of General Barlow, of General Sheridan's staff, visited them. Their descriptions of the geysers on Fire Hole, near a branch of the Madison, with a series of illustrated articles in *Scribner's Monthly*, attracted very general attention to this new world of wonders. The pictures of them begin to come back to us in the European illustrated papers, and tourists and scientific men on the other side of the Atlantic will be equally anxious to visit this wonderful locality. The falls and the canon of the Yellowstone, on the way to the geysers, are themselves worth a journey of a thousand miles to see. Yellowstone Lake, nestled far up among the summits of the Rocky Mountains, might well employ a couple of weeks, while the geysers themselves, across a divide some twenty miles to the north,

might well detain the tourist and the scientific explorer for a month. Congress, during its last session, wisely devoted this nook of the mountains to a public park. Avarice will, therefore, never be able to control it for private benefit.

It is understood that the Northern Pacific Railway will run within fifty or sixty miles of this park, and, probably, by the summer of 1874 or '75, the people of the whole country will have an opportunity to visit this new and curious region. Five years ago, who would have supposed that the mystery of the Colorado would now be solved, and the most wonderful geyser district in the world would have been discovered on the head-waters of the Missouri?

EDITORIAL NOTES.

—THE words of the "Star Spangled Banner," it is well known, were written by Francis Scott Key, a young lawyer of Baltimore, in September, 1814, but the authorship of the accompanying music is not known. The antiquarian authorities say the tune was taken from an old English song, entitled "To Anacreon in Heaven," but the authorship of both the words and music of this seem to be forgotten past recall. The words of "Hail Columbia" were written in 1798, by Joseph Hopkinson, of Philadelphia. Its tune was likewise borrowed, or stolen, from "The President's March," the music of which was composed by Prof. Phyla, of Philadelphia. The words of the National Ode beginning "My Country, tis of thee," were written by Rev. Dr. Samuel Francis Smith, and the music also captured, from the British national anthem "God Save the King."

—THE Illinois Institution for the Education of Feeble-Minded Children has lately made its eighth annual report. This public charity was organized in 1865. It is under the able superintendency of C. T. Wilbur, M. D., assisted by a matron, a clerk, and four lady teachers, and contains at present eighty-two pupils. This number is all that can be accommodated at present, for lack of room, but forms but a very small minority of this sadly unfortunate class in Illinois, as the census of 1870 returned one thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight persons in that state as idiotic, a number exceeding her insane population. Of course, the state of Illinois contains no greater proportion of idiots to her total

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